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## **Gun offender who asked, “Am I going federal?” is sentenced to 15 years in federal prison**

A federal judge has sentenced **Shah McKenney**, of Providence, to 15 years in federal prison as an Armed Career Criminal for being a felon in possession of a firearm. In May, McKenney admitted that there was a gun in his car when Providence Police stopped it in December.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres imposed today in U.S. District Court, Providence.

When officers apprehended McKenney after he tried to flee from a traffic stop, he asked, “Am I going federal?” – a reference to intensified federal prosecution of gun offenders under **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative.

“No case better demonstrates our efforts in Project Safe Neighborhoods than this one,” U.S. Attorney Corrente said. “It is clear that the message is out there – if you are a felon carrying a gun, you will be prosecuted federally, you will go to prison for a significant amount of time, and that prison will be a long way from home.”

At the hearing in May when McKenney pleaded guilty, Assistant U.S. Attorney Gerard B. Sullivan said that the government could prove that, on December 22, Providence Police

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Officers Thomas Zincone and Dennis O'Brien saw McKenney driving a car on Douglas Avenue. Knowing that McKenney did not have a driver's license, and after determining that the car's license plate had been reported stolen, they followed the car into the parking lot of a gas station.

McKenney tried to flee, first in the car and then on foot, but officers caught him, whereupon he screamed several times, "Am I going federal?" That alerted the officers to the presence of a gun, which they found in the passenger compartment of the car that McKenney had been driving. McKenney later admitted that the gun, a loaded, .45 caliber revolver, was his and said he'd bought it on the street for \$150.

McKenney, 26, of 7 Ledge Street, was previously convicted of a variety of offenses, including drug trafficking, and has been arrested 14 times as an adult. Because he has at least three prior convictions for violent crimes or serious drug-trafficking offenses, he was deemed an Armed Career Criminal, which subjected him to a minimum 15-year prison sentence.

"Our collaborative efforts over the last several years are paying off," U.S. Attorney Corrente said. "Providence Police, ATF, the Attorney General's Office, and my office work together to combat gun crimes and get the message out to the community: We want to rid our neighborhoods of gun-toting felons and make the streets safe for honest citizens."

**Providence Police** and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** investigated the case. **Project Safe Neighborhoods** is a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and gun offenders have been sentenced to a total of more than 600 years in federal prison.